



UNFINISHED BUSINESS: THE CONFESSION PROGRAM

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community issued statements of thanks and appreciation that a historic wrong had been acknowledged and corrected, but there were no public celebrations and no festive parades in the Chinese American community.

As the community realized full well, the repeal was enacted only as a response to the international situation 1) to encourage China to continue resisting Japanese aggression, and 2) to counter Japanese propaganda charging white racist and discriminatory attitudes toward non-white races. In order to allay the fears of racists and ultra-conservatives opposed to Chinese immigration the bill provided that

...all Chinese persons entering the United States annually as immigrants shall be allocated to the quota for Chinese computed under the provisions of section 11 of the said Act. [Immigration Act of 1924]

This annual quota worked out to a symbolic 105. As implemented, any applicant with as little as 50 percent Chinese blood, regardless of country of birth, was considered to be Chinese and came under the quota. Moreover alien Chinese wives and foreign-

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese Exclusion acts were repealed by act of Congress in 1943, but the succeeding law was full of inequities. It took more than two decades before Congress passed a law granting Chinese immigrants treatment equal with immigrants from Western nations. This paper examines some Chinese immigration issues during this interim, focusing mainly on the events leading up to the confession program and its aftermath.

AFTER THE REPEAL

On December 17, 1943, a few hours after he returned to Washington, D.C., from the Cairo Conference, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed legislation enacting Public Law 199 passed by the 78th Congress.¹ Thus a stroke of the pen ended sixty-one years of Chinese exclusion. The Chinese American



born children of American citizens born after May 24, 1934 (who were considered under the law to be aliens), were quota immigrants.² Thus even though the Chinese acquired the right of naturalization to be U.S. citizens under the legislation, the law was highly restrictive as to the number of Chinese immigrants who could enter the country.

No sooner had the Exclusion acts been repealed than the Chinese American community began lobbying efforts to liberalize immigration laws for Chinese. In late 1945 Congress passed the War Brides Act allowing the immigration of alien wives of American servicemen. However, the law proved to be of limited usefulness for Chinese wives since their entries were limited by the Chinese quota. However, led by the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, Chinese American organizations successfully lobbied the 79th Congress to pass Public Law 713 in 1946, which put entry of Chinese wives of American citizens on a non-quota basis.³ This change in the law proved to be timely as the next year the 80th Congress also passed the G.I. Fiancées Act, which allowed the entry of the betrothed of ex-servicemen. However, citizens' minor children born abroad, as defined above, were still not granted non-quota status until the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952.

These changes in the immigration laws caused changes in immigration patterns. During the decade just before World War II the most numerous category for Chinese was comprised of children of citizens entering the country, averaging some 1,157 each year from 1930 to 1942, but from 1947 to 1952 the average dropped drastically to 122 per year. On the other hand, after citizens' spouses

were put on a non-quota basis in 1946, immigration in this category increased dramatically from an annual average of 55 from 1930 to 1940 to an average of 1,518 from 1947 to 1952. Since that period females have continued to be the most numerous category of Chinese immigrants entering the United States.

Due to the increased immigration of females, the abnormally high ratio of one thousand males to one female began to drop more rapidly. In the continental United States it fell from 285.3 in 1940 to 189.6 in 1950. In Hawaii, where there was a higher percentage of families and the American-born was in the majority, the decrease was less dramatic, changing only from 127.6 in 1940 to 111.2 in 1950. These changes in the immigration laws laid the basis facilitating the Chinese community to make the transition from a bachelor society to that of a family-based society.

The period after the end of the war saw the political and economic situation in Nationalist-ruled China deteriorating rapidly with uncontrolled inflation and rampant corruption. In the civil war the People's liberation Army was defeating poorly led and war-weary Nationalist troops. On October 1, 1949 the Communists and their supporters had established the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the Chinese mainland. The United States, however, continued to recognize the defeated Nationalist regime which had taken refuge on Taiwan, the island that had been returned to China in 1945 after a half century of Japanese rule. Relations between America and the new Chinese government became strained and soon flared into armed conflict when both the United



States and the People's Republic became actively involved in the Korean War on opposing sides. This began a continuing state of tension between the two nations that lasted more than two decades.

During this period the previously mentioned changes in immigration laws had enabled Chinese in the United States to take war-deferred trips to China to visit their families and try to bring them to America. Many war veterans went to their ancestral land to marry or be engaged and brought their spouses and fiancées to this country. Toward the end of the 1940s, other Chinese, seeking a more stable political and economic environment for their lives and uncertain what the pending political changeover in mainland China would bring, fled to Taiwan and Hong Kong. These became way stations for many who intended to emigrate to the relative safety of countries abroad. Those seeking to enter the United States, however, all faced a common obstacle-the restrictive Chinese quota in the existing immigration laws. Thus those wanting help to facilitate their entries into America turned to the existing organizational network that had been set up during the Exclusion era to assist immigration into this country.

PAPER OFFSPRING AND THE *GAM SAAN JONG*

During the Exclusion era the situation in China was such that it impelled many to emigrate abroad to improve their circumstances. Some sought to enter the United States despite the Exclusion laws. Since the Chinese regarded these laws as discriminatory and unjust they felt justified in taking any meas-

ures, legal or otherwise, that would successfully get them into the country. The existence of a demand for such services led to the adaptation of the *gam saan jong* (Gold Mountain firm) system to assist Chinese immigration to North America.

Gam saan jong were originally firms in Hong Kong that specialized in exporting Chinese foodstuffs and utensils to Chinese firms in the Americas. They also handled mail and remittances from Chinese in the Americas and in turn made deliveries to their families and relatives in the villages. Before the Exclusion laws they helped to recruit labor to go to the Americas and as an extension of this service assisted fellow clansmen and villagers with the paperwork and procedural matters necessary to sail abroad. Some of the larger firms also maintained hostels to house fellow clansmen and villagers waiting to go abroad and also those returning from the Americas on the way to the villages to visit their families.

Due to the nature of their services each of these firms was usually operated by Chinese originating from the specific area in rural China served by the firm and from which the firm drew most of its clientele. Associated firms also existed in larger Chinese communities in the Americas. The owners and managers of these firms were or were closely connected to the leadership of Chinese clans and district associations in the United States.⁴

It is uncertain when the *gam saan jong* first appeared, but by the 1880s several existed in Hong Kong, and by the turn of the century there were more than one hundred. It was claimed that at their height during the first half of twentieth century there were more than two hundred such firms.⁵



When the Exclusion laws began to be implemented in the United States, it was a logical step for these firms to expand their services to help clients enter America using whatever practicable means. During the early years of exclusion some Chinese entered the country stowed away or served on ships crossing the Pacific and jumped ship at American ports. Others were smuggled by ships stopping off the coast or by land across the Canadian and Mexican borders. These entries, however, often required taking circuitous routes and were fraught with risks. In time most applicants for entry came directly to the American port of entry claiming right of entry in accordance with law. At first many claimed exempt status or American birth. By the twentieth century, as the Chinese won court cases recognizing the right to citizenship of offspring of citizens, more and more Chinese sought entry claiming derivative citizenship. Some of these were actually the individuals as claimed but many were individuals who had assumed the identities of the named applicants, thus becoming substitute or “paper” offspring. This was known as the substitution or “immigration family” scheme.

During the Exclusion era American citizens of Chinese descent upon returning to America from China would be questioned by the Immigration Service regarding their marital status, the name of any children they may have had, and the dates and places of their births. It did not take long before some individuals began claiming the maximum number of offspring, consistent with the years of marriage and the length of their visit to China. This claim was made whether children had been born or not, thus creating an “immigration slot” to lay the groundwork enabling

someone to enter America a decade or two hence as a citizen's offspring, usually a son. Although sometimes slots claimed in a family were given or sold to relatives in informal fashion, more often a *gam saan jong* played the role of middleman to bring together supplier and buyer.

By the eve of World War II the use of the immigration slot had become the preferred method for many Chinese from Guangdong, especially the Pearl River Delta region, to enter the United States, and many *gam saan jong* had developed highly sophisticated citizenship brokering operations. Their staffs brought together those who had immigration slots available and prospective clients; they collected and helped to prepare documentary evidence to be submitted to American consular authorities; and they gathered and organized family histories and coached applicants on questions which might be asked in interrogations by American authorities (*hau gung*). Often family data were deliberately designed to be easily remembered; e.g., birthdays with some sort of numerical relationship, such as the first, fifth, tenth, or fifteenth day of the month.⁶

During the post-World War II period the number of Chinese seeking to enter the United States far exceeded the highly restrictive annual immigration quota. Thus the *gam saan jong* system continued to function to meet the needs of the immigrants during the post-war period. In the 1950s there were at least 124 *gam saan jong* in Hong Kong, of which about fifty made it their principal business to facilitate immigration to the Americas.⁷ After the war the two American consulates in the Far East handling the bulk of the Chinese



immigration cases were those in Guangzhou (Canton) and in Hong Kong. After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 the United States continued to recognize the Republic of China government on Taiwan and withdrew its diplomatic representatives from the PRC. The American consulate in Guangzhou closed and transferred all pending cases to the Hong Kong consulate. In the resulting logjam many cases faced long delays waiting for consular decisions. With the intense competition for a limited number of spots in the quota it was inevitable that some would attempt to buy influence.

For example, at one point the *gam saan jong* were able to recruit several local interpreters employed at the consulate general in Hong Kong and had them give special last-minute coaching on the interviewing techniques of the vice-consul to whom a particular applicant had been assigned for an interview. Often the *gam saan jong* asked the applicant or his or her sponsor for *haak chin* (“black money”—a bribe) to grease the palms of persons who might be able to influence or aid in facilitating the case. In one case in 1951 a former vice-consul, John Wayne Williams, confessed that while serving in Hong Kong he had accepted \$10,000 in bribes to expedite some seventy visas for Chinese.⁸ In the United States it had also long been the practice, actually since the implementing of the Exclusion acts, for Chinese to pay black money to lawyers allegedly to pass along to appropriate immigration inspectors and interpreters.

As caseloads increased, especially at the Hong Kong consulate after closure of the Guangzhou consulate, immigration lawyers

actively sought other means to facilitate entries. A system was devised whereby the American consulate at Hong Kong issued travel affidavits allowing citizenship claimants to travel directly to a U.S. port of entry where the immigration service could take testimony and rule on the applicants' admissibility. The Guangzhou and Hong Kong consulates general issued 5,416 such affidavits of which 5,120 were issued from November 1952 to December 1952 in the latter city. More than 97 percent were admitted to the United States.

Lawyers for applicants who were refused passports by the American consulate also took advantage of loopholes in the laws to gain entries for their clients. The most prevalent method was to sue in federal court against the Secretary of State under the provisions of Section 503 of the 1940 Nationality Act, asking the court to make a declaratory judgment that the plaintiff was a U.S. citizen and admit him or her to the United States. The first such case occurred in 1947. By the end of 1952 a total of 1,288 cases had been filed, most of which were filed in that same year. The bulk were filed in California courts, where there was a total of 905 cases.⁹

Applicants who had been refused a passport could also apply for Certificates of Identity to travel to a port of entry in the United States where they could be paroled to pursue their claims further. In 1952 out of 677 applications the Hong Kong consul general issued 247 certificates of identity. After that date a provision in the 1952 Immigration Law restricted the use of this method and



although the number of applications had risen to 735 in 1953 the number of certificates issued dropped to 10.¹⁰

INVESTIGATIONS OF IMMIGRATION FRAUD

Although the United States had repealed the Exclusion acts, immigration authorities continued to look upon Chinese claims of citizenship status with suspicion. The increase in transpacific traffic from China and Hong Kong to the United States after World War II offered the U.S. State Department and Immigration Service more opportunities to investigate and check Chinese immigration documents. Immigration fraud cases increased correspondingly and often got into the news. For example in 1947 San Francisco immigration authorities detained more than several dozen Chinese, including more than twenty ex-servicemen, who had arrived after visits to China, to investigate their citizenship claims. Some were indicted for immigration fraud and those who could not prove their citizenship status were deported. At least one who was detained for investigation hanged himself in the detention quarters.¹¹

When tension developed in the relations between the newly founded People's Republic of China and the United States, the relations between the two countries also became a part of the cold war. Chinese immigration fraud became in the eyes of cold warriors a national security issue and the American consular and immigration services redoubled their efforts to halt Chinese illegal entries.

In 1951 the American consulate required the testing of applicants for A-B-O-AB blood

groups to determine the possibility of claimed familial relationships. This was a method that could detect about 50 percent of the false relationships. The *gam saan jong* soon countered by pre-testing the “families” blood to ensure that their blood type was compatible. That failing they would bribe doctors or try to have a substitute take the test for the applicant. Another method used by the consulate was to submit the applicants to radiological and clinical examinations to confirm the fact that they were of the ages claimed. This, however, could detect fraud only if the age of an applicant differed significantly from the age claimed in his application.¹²

In 1952 the consulate general set up an investigative unit in Hong Kong to delve into citizenship and other consular cases. The unit's personnel at one point allegedly numbered more than two hundred. This unit paid informants to obtain background information on applicants. They also entered applicants' homes to search for evidence. More than two hundred cases were investigated in the fiscal years of 1953 to 1955.¹³ The unit also compiled the names of villages, populations, and associated clans in the emigrant areas as references to verify the applicants' claims as to village of origin. Some of the clan-village information for Taishan (Toishan), Kaiping (Hoiping), Xinhui (Sunwui), and Zhongshan (Chungshan) was later published.

In the United States immigration authorities also set their sights on ferreting out those having fraudulent immigration documents. Sometimes they entered Chinese places of business and demanded to see the people's documents. At other times they raided areas where Chinese congregated in what may be



termed fishing expeditions.¹⁴ They also arrested and indicted a number of Chinese for immigration fraud.¹⁵

On December 9, 1955, Everett F. Drumright, U.S. Consul General at Hong Kong, transmitted Foreign Service Dispatch No. 931 to the Department of State in Washington, D.C. The report, based on the consulate general's extensive investigations and entitled "Report on the Problem of Fraud at Hong Kong," made the accusation that

...a criminal conspiracy to evade the laws of the United States has developed into so well-organized a system at Hong Kong that:

1. Almost any Chinese with the proper resources may enter the United States even if ineligible under our immigration laws,
2. Adequate security precautions can hardly be taken to exclude Chinese Communist agents or criminal elements,
3. An alien Chinese can purchase American citizenship for (US) \$3,000. Terms: \$500 down, balance after arrival in the U.S., and
4. Thousands of dollars in American pensions have been collected annually by persons not entitled to them.

The report went into a short history of Chinese immigration and described the fraudulent practices uncovered by the investigation "in order that steps may be taken to destroy that system for once and for all, thus bringing an end to a unique history of illegal immigration...before Communist China is able to bend that system to the services of her purposes alone."¹⁶

By this time the federal government felt that it was ready to launch a large-scale coordinated operation to halt the alleged conspiracy. The Department of State immediately sent twenty agents to Hong Kong in December and January to help investigate illicit immigration.¹⁷ Just as the Chinese were celebrating the arrival of the year of the monkey, New York U.S. Attorney Paul W. Williams announced on February 14, 1956, the launching of a federal grand jury investigation of an alleged well-organized three-million-dollar-a-year racket with headquarters in San Francisco, New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C., and operated by Chinese, which arranged for the illegal entry of thousands of Chinese nationals into the country at \$2,000 each. In keeping with the anti-Communist atmosphere of the day he hinted ominously that some of these who entered the country were believed to be Communists.¹⁸

This was soon followed by another federal grand jury probe in San Francisco. On February 29, the U.S. Attorney's Office ordered approximately twenty-four to twenty-six Chinese associations to produce within twenty-four hours all their records and rolls, etc., from the time of their first existence for inspection by the jury. Later, six photography studios were also subpoenaed to bring negatives or prints of all organizations' group photographs with twelve or more people taken within the last fifteen years.¹⁹

The news of these moves by the government caused fear and consternation to spread among Chinese American communities throughout the United States. Shoppers avoided Chinatowns; business in restaurants



dipped. New York businessmen claimed that they lost more than \$100,000 a week in revenue due to the fears generated by the U.S. probe. San Francisco community leaders alleged that the tourist business had dropped thirty percent since the investigation began.²⁰

In San Francisco the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA, Chinese Six Companies) appointed a welfare committee chaired by Joseph Quan, with Lim P. Lee as vice-chairman, Charles L. Leong as publicity director, Charles F. Wong as chief counsel, Harold Faulkner and Marvin Lewis as trial counsels, and Robert K. Fong and Ngai Ho Hong as co-counsels. On March 15 CCBA called and chaired a press conference together with representatives from other Chinese organizations. It issued a press release from the CCBA protesting the “blanket” nature of the subpoenas served on the Chinese organizations and also objecting to the use of criminal investigation methods in a civil case.

Led by CCBA, a number of the Chinese organizations went as a group to the District Court to quash the subpoenas. After hearing arguments from both sides, on March 20 Judge Oliver H. Carter found for the Chinese organizations stating that the demand for all of the records of every family association “had the effect of being a mass inquisition of the family records of a substantial portion of the Chinese population of San Francisco. When considered as a whole, and viewed in the light of the circumstances, the gross effect of the subpoenas is that they are unreasonable.”²¹

The Chinese did not even have time to heave collective sighs of relief and celebrate, for the

U.S. State Department on the same day released the full text of the Drumright Report to keep public attention focused on the issue. Chinese American journalist Gilbert Woo cautioned his readers in his weekly column:

The winning of this case was not an empty victory, but if you think that the crisis has passed, that there should be no more worries from now on, and that you can resume the “peaceful” existence of the period before February 29...then you are very wrong. The ninety page report released by the State Department before Judge Carter handed down his ruling should cause you to shiver even when it is not cold...When the government issued a report like this, then you should be alert. Frankly, I have never seen a government issue a report like this one that accuses members of a single nationality of committing all the serious offenses under the heavens!²²

Indeed the U.S. Attorney did not abandon the investigation. But instead of attacking the Chinese community in a massive frontal assault and forcing all in the community to close ranks to repel the perceived common external threat, the government returned to the time-consuming but more effective tactic of picking selected targets a few at a time. The implicated included some prominent leaders and businessmen in the community.

In San Francisco, businessman and vice president of the Soo Yuen Association William W. Fong and Robert L. Levy, an immigration



lawyer who had been practicing for thirty-four years, were indicted for conspiracy to violate immigration laws. In New York, Eng Wing On, owner of the Wing On Wo store and Sing Kee, operator of the China Overseas Travel Service, were charged in April and May respectively with passport fraud. In September the U.S. Attorney's office in San Francisco subpoenaed Albert K. Chow, an important figure in Chinese Nationalist and Democratic party circles and so-called mayor of Chinatown, for a series of interrogations on his activities in connection with immigration fraud; however, Chow passed away a year later before any action was taken.²³

There were even more less prominent people who were implicated in immigration civil and criminal cases. In 1958 the State Department provided the following information to the House Appropriation Committee:

The investigation in Hong Kong together with related counterpart activities...in the United States from July 1, 1956 to December 31, 1957 resulted in final consideration of 908 civil action cases in the courts. Of these 908 only 51 were lost at trial or conceded by the Government, 49 cases were won and 808 were dismissed at the request of the plaintiff, which is tantamount to winning. In addition to that, we have developed 57 cases during the calendar year 1957 where criminal prosecution seemed to lie.²⁴

THE NATIONAL CHINESE WELFARE COUNCIL

The implication of people prominent in the community was alarming and a crisis atmosphere permeated the Chinese community. Community leaders desperately sought a solution. In 1957 under the leadership of Shing Tai Liang, president of New York's Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and chief editor of the Chinese Nationalist Party organ Chinese Journal, a National Conference of Chinese Communities was convened in Washington, D.C., from March 3 to 7. The 124 delegates from Chinese communities all over the United States voted to form the National Chinese Welfare Council which consisted basically of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association or equivalent organization from each Chinese community. The objective of the organization was "consolidation of volitions and views of the Chinese people in America, centralization of their efforts and strength, solution of their difficult problems and promotion of their welfare."²⁵ This was the first national organization formed by the Chinese in America and there was hope that it would be a voice speaking up for the Chinese American community.

In subsequent years the Welfare Council lobbied for laws more favorable to Chinese immigration, but it was just one of several Chinese American groups lobbying on such issues. The organization was formed originally as a nonpolitical non-sectarian group, but pro-Nationalist elements soon seized control and the group devoted as much time to pro-Taiwan, anti-People's Republic of China activities as it did to immigration issues. Thus the National Welfare Council proved to be



unable to provide the leadership for the solution to the immigration problem that the Chinese American on the street was seeking.

CONFESSION PROGRAM

Ironically, the large number of Chinese transgressions became a factor working in their favor. Many Chinese American families were involved in the immigration fraud activities that had been going on for more than six decades. When the fraud in one family had been uncovered it often would implicate several families. In order to investigate thoroughly all fraud cases, the government would have to expend much manpower and funds and also tie up the courts for an indeterminable period. Thus it would be impractical to try to deport the tens of thousands of Chinese who had violated the laws. Moreover, the government knew that the cause for these transgressions was the result of unjust laws, and with America claiming herself leader of the “free world” the rest of the world was focused on how this country treated its minorities. For these various reasons the government was discriminating in its prosecutions, going after major offenders and political dissidents, such as members of the left, supporters of the PRC, or other selected targets.²⁶ As to Chinese whose only crime had been to enter this country or to help relatives to enter this country through fraudulent means, a “confession” program eventually evolved, after unofficial discussions with various community leaders, to rectify fraudulent immigration identities.

This program apparently was first broached in 1956. At first immigration authorities wanted the Chinese to put announcements in

the newspapers to seek the persons in their “immigration family” and then all would go together to confess at the office of the immigration service.²⁷ However, over time members of the “family” may have spread all over the country and also may not happen to have read the newspaper announcements. Moreover, many Chinese Americans were wary that this may have been a possible trap set by the immigration authorities. Thus this initial offer had few tangible results. The influential Chinese organizations by and large were cool to the idea.²⁸

Around 1957 immigration authorities modified the program. Officials promised that Chinese who had taken fraudulent oaths before July 15, 1957, would not be prosecuted for perjury and called upon them to confess and readjust their immigration statuses.²⁹ The 1957 Immigration and Naturalization Service Annual Report stated confidently:

In many cases Chinese persons illegally in the United States who have long feared deportation or prosecution now make full disclosures knowing the Service will assist them to adjust their status if at all possible under the law.

However, most of those who confessed were those who felt that the government probe of their cases had proceeded so far that they had little choice. One of the best known cases during this period was that of Xiqi (Sai Kee) Village.

Sai Kee was a village in Taishan with surname Xu (Huie). During the first half of the twentieth century approximately 250 villagers, representing the bulk of able-bodied



men in the village, had assumed other identities to enter the United States as legal immigrants. Most settled in the San Francisco Bay Area. One of these was Lim P. Lee, former postmaster general who came with his parents when he was one year old.³⁰ When immigration authorities began investigating their cases, a few villagers confessed and implicated the others. The villagers then went *en masse* to confess to the immigration authorities and the event made the national news.³¹

Other Chinese were reluctant to be involved with immigration authorities, a feeling that had been conditioned by decades of regarding immigration authorities as objects of fear and avoidance. Many still were not ready to throw themselves upon the mercy of the government and the number of confessions were still limited.

Finally in March 1959 the Immigration and Naturalization Service came up with a plan whereby Chinese who had committed fraud to enter the country on or before September 11, 1957, could confess to the immigration authorities and adjust their status. Those entering before July 1, 1924, could be immediately naturalized; those entering before June 28, 1940, could obtain permanent residency and apply for citizenship after five years; and those who entered during the period from World War II to October 28, 1948, could obtain permanent residency if they had lived for ten years continuously in the United States.³²

Confession almost always meant that the individual had to give information on others. Thus while many Chinese confessed to clear their status in order to allow them to bring

their families over from the Far East, others did so only under duress because some other “paper relatives” had already confessed and they feared detection. There were still many families, numbers unknown, that did not confess either because they were not investigated or they felt that immigration authorities could not prove their fraudulent immigration status.

The confession program allowed many Chinese to adjust their immigration status and thus reassume their true names and identities without fear of prosecution by immigration authorities, and also to petition for their family members abroad to enter this country legally. However, it also caused much anguish and stress as individuals tried to decide whether to confess or not. The issue often split families when members could not unanimously agree on a course of action.

Individuals who confessed ran a risk since they would then be exposed to criminal prosecution by the Department of Justice which had the discretionary power to make such decisions. The selected few who were indicted were usually those who had also violated other immigration laws or had held politically heretical beliefs contrary to the mainstream, such as support for the People’s Republic of China.³³ Another several hundred were not charged but their status was placed in limbo after the Department of Justice stripped their citizenship status. Often immigration authorities did not grant permanent residency until many years later, as much as fifteen years in some cases.³⁴

Due to the enactment of the 1965 Immigration Act the need for the special treatment accorded under the program was



no longer there and the program was terminated on February 2, 1966. During the ten years of the program 13,895 Chinese confessed, thereby exposing 22,083 persons and foreclosing the use of an additional 11,294 slots.³⁵

CONCLUSIONS

The period after World War II was marked by a continued instability in the Far East which drove many Chinese to disperse in a second diaspora all over the world. The United States with its relatively stable political and economic conditions was an inviting haven to many. However, although Congress had repealed the Exclusion acts in 1943, the spirit of exclusion remained in the very restrictive quota of 105. This situation invited the continued flourishing of the fraudulent entry system which had been developed to gain entry during the Exclusion era. American authorities had long been aware of the traffic, but it was the changed political relations between the United States and mainland China during and after the Korean War which provided the additional impetus instigating an American decision to crack down and put a halt to the practice.

Practical and political considerations eventually forced the federal government to adopt a confession program. Although the program gave rise to stress and strain within many families due to disagreements as to the course of action to take, and the government was not hesitant about using the program to move against political dissidents, overall it did enable many Chinese to remove the clouds over their legal status in this country and help resolve a knotty problem that was a legacy

created by a racist exclusionary immigration policy.

NOTES

¹ Fred W. Riggs, *Pressures on Congress, A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1950), 38.

² On May 24, 1934, Congress amended the law relative to citizenship and naturalization. The law recognizes that any child born abroad whose father and/or mother is a U.S. citizen "is declared to be a citizen of the United States," however the law further stipulates:

In cases where one of the parents is an alien [author's note: this situation is applicable to many Chinese American citizens with Chinese wives], the right of citizenship shall not descend unless the child comes to the United States and resides therein for a least five years continuously immediately previous to his eighteenth birthday, and unless, within six months after the child's twenty-first birthday, he or she shall take an oath of allegiance to the United States of America as prescribed by the Bureau of Naturalization.

Thus these immigrants were considered aliens when they entered the country.

³ Pei Chi Liu, *A History of the Chinese in the United States of America II* (Taipei: *Liming wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi*, 1981), 115.

⁴ Liu Zuoren, "Jinshanzhuang de yanjiu" [Study of the gam saan jong], *Zhongguo jingji* [The Chinese Economist] 101 (Feb. 10, 1959); Zheng Dehua, "Xianggang jinshanzhuang de xingshuai he



tade qishi” [Rise and decline of the *gam saan jong* in Hong Kong and its significance], *Sing Tao Jih Pao*, April 10, 1993.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Drumright Report*, 27,31,32,41.

⁷ Ibid., 23.

⁸ *Chinese World*, March 29, 1951; “Department of State Appropriations for 1959,” *Hearings Before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 85th Congress, 2nd Session* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1958), 179-80, as quoted in S.W Kung, *Chinese in American Life, Some Aspects of Their History, Status, Problems, and Contributions* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1962), 309-10.

⁹ *Drumright Report*, 19-22. Section 503 of the Nationality Act of 1940 was the basis for the legal action.

¹⁰ Ibid., 22-23.

¹¹ *Chung Sai Yat Po*. Nov. 20, 22, 24, 28; Dec. 18, 1947.

¹² *Drumright Report*, 43-45.

¹³ Ibid., 46-47; *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, Oct. 12, 1976.

¹⁴ *Chinese World*, May 27, 1953. On the night of May 14, immigration officers raided the Chinese area in Marysville, California, for several hours and booked three as alleged illegal immigrants.

¹⁵ Some examples are in *Chinese World*, June 20, 25, 1953; Feb. 8, 12; March 27, 1954. In June 1953, fifteen Chinese in Stockton and Denver were charged with illegal entry. One was Donald Harold Wah You, prominent businessman and operator of the Centro Mart in Stockton. The remaining fourteen involved three generations of the Ho family, which had claimed derivative citizenship through the grandfather.

In another case the same month prominent

San Francisco businessman George Jue was charged with conspiracy to violate immigration laws and was found guilty after a trial. In February, three in Stockton were indicted with illegal entry and pled guilty in March. In the following month two Ma brothers pled guilty to perjury in a citizenship case.

¹⁶ “Synopsis,” *Drumright Report*, 1-3a.

¹⁷ *Chinese World*, March 3, 1956.

¹⁸ *Chinese World*, Feb. 15, 16, 1956.

¹⁹ Chinese Six Companies press release, March 15, 1956; *Chinese World*, March 2, 7, 1956.

²⁰ *Chinese World*, March 17, 1956; Lim P. Lee, “The Mass Subpoena of Chinese American Organizations in 1956,” *Asian Week*, Oct. 21; Nov. 4, 1982.

²¹ *Chinese World*, March 21, 22, 1956.

²² Gilbert Woo, “*Suibi*” (Informal essay), *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, March 23, 1956.

²³ *Chinese World*, March 14; April 13, 14, 20, 27; May 4, 5, 1956; *China Post Weekly*, Nos. 540 (Oct. 7, 1956) and 543 (Oct. 28, 1956).

²⁴ “Department of State Appropriations for 1959,” 176, as quoted in Kung, 156.

²⁵ “*Quan Mei Huaren Fuli Zonghui li jie daibiao dahui de jingguo*” [The course of events of each convention of the National Chinese Welfare Council], *Quan Mei Huaren Fuli Zonghui chengli 30 zhou nian ji di-12 jie daibiao dahui ji’nian tekan* [Commemorative publication for the 30th anniversary of the founding and the 12th convention of the National Chinese Welfare Council of America] (San Francisco: National Chinese Welfare Council, 1987), 10; “Bylaws of the National Chinese Welfare Council,” revised and adopted at the 11th Convention, May 1984, *Quan Mei Huaren Fuli Zonghui chengli 30 zhou nian ji di-12 daibiao dahui ji’nian tekan*, n.p.

²⁶ For details on the persecution of the left



during the Cold War, see Him Mark Lai, “To Bring Forth a New China, to Build a Better America: The Chinese Marxist Left in America to the 1960s,” *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* 1992 (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1992), 3-82.

²⁷ Y. K. Chu, *History of the Chinese People in America* (New York: China Times, 1975), 152.

²⁸ Gilbert Woo, “*Jinmen yiyu*” [Reminiscences by the Golden Gate], *Chinese Pacific Weekly*, April 10, 1975.

²⁹ Chu, 152.

³⁰ Serena Chan, “Look Back at the Chinese Confession Program,” *East/West News*, April 23, 1987.

³¹ *San Francisco Call-Bulletin*, Dec. 30, 1957; *Time*, Jan. 20, 1968.

³² *Pan-American Chinese Weekly*, March 19, 1959, 16; Chu, 153.

³³ Lai, “To Bring Forth a New China.”

³⁴ Chan, “A Look Back.”

³⁵ Press release by Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of Justice, Dec. 31, 1972.

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